GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1894
ANSWERED ON:28.11.2016
Import Clearance Certificate
Senthilnathan Shri PR.

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the traders are facing problems due to delay in issuance of clearance certificates at various sea ports;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the remedial steps taken by the Government to reduce the loss of traders due to non clearance or late clearance of the goods imported through various ports; and
(c) the steps taken by the Government to expedite the process of clearance certificate for food grains, pulses and other food products at various sea ports in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) and (b) Import of products like drugs/pharma, food, plant & plant products, livestock & livestock products are governed by their respective legislations and Rules there under. Clearance systems of all these categories of products are in place at ports of entry.

The Customs Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade (SWIFT) enables importers/exporters to file a common electronic 'Integrated Declaration' on the ICEGATE portal. The Integrated Declaration compiles the information requirements of Customs, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Plant Quarantine, Animal Quarantine, Drug Controller, Wild Life Control Bureau and Textile Committee and it replaces nine separate forms required by these 6 different agencies and Customs. With the roll-out of the Single Window, CBEC has also introduced an Integrated Risk Management facility for Partner Govt. Agencies (PGAs), which will ensure that consignments are not selected by agencies routinely for examination and testing, but based on the principle of risk management.

(c) The Government has taken the following steps to facilitate trade and import of food products into the country:

(i) Customs in consultation with Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has introduced Risk Management System (RMS) which will eventually reduce the sampling.
(ii) Draft Food Safety and Standards (Food Import) Regulations, 2016 has been notified on 25.10.2016.

(iii) To streamline the functioning of NABL(National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories) accredited labs (which test the import samples) and to reduce the time taken in testing, new labs (increased to 112 NABL accredited labs) have been notified for testing of imported samples. Apart from this, 14 referral labs have also been notified for re-testing of import samples. The samples to the labs are referred through random selection by FICS (Food Import Clearance System) to maintain integrity of testing procedures.

(iv)Further, Provisional NOC (PNOC) is issued immediately for imported food items having very short Shelf-life (less than7 days) such as fresh fruit, processed cheese etc.
(v) FSSAI has issued ad-hoc instructions related to re-sampling and re-testing of food grains including pulses consignments permitting cleaning of pulses/cereals consignments at Custom bonded warehouses.

(vi) FSSAI has allowed drawal of single sample out of the commingled cargo of pulses, oils and other food grains such as cereals for multiple importers with same IGM number vide order dated 12.09.2016 and 10.11.2016
(vii)In case of primary food like food grains, pulses, fruits, dry fruits, whole spices etc. imported in package, labelling requirement of name and address of the importer has been exempted and can be verified from accompanying documents of the consignment

(viii)FSSAI has shared the microbiological parameters for testing of meat and meat products and fish and fishery products with the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries.
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